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modern sense of the term. His interest in history was so completely subordinate to his interest in edification that he freely idealized tradition, making no effort to copy available sources closely nor yet intentionally perverting his sources. When he wrote tradition was in a fluid state, and was no doubt reported differently by different persons. Thus he felt quite free to interpret the tradition, whether it was a matter of his own personal recollection or was derived from a source, in line with the edifying intention of his work. Whether the author was an eye-witness or not is, therefore, not a fundamental consideration for the question of either literary unity or historicity. The item of first importance is the author's purpose. And exegetical study of the gospel shows, according to Weiss, that this is such as to prohibit the copying of original documents by him; and an understanding of his purpose also enables us to distinguish to some extent between what is the product of his fancy and what he derived from more reliable tradition.

This insistence upon literary unity—a point upon which Clemen and Weiss agree—is very timely in view of the recent advocacy of partition theories by Schwartz, Wellhausen, Spitta, and Wendt. The impression of unity which the gospel makes, so far as its pragmatic interest is concerned, is certainly striking, and is a strong argument against the analysts.

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BROOKE'S COMMENTARY ON THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES¹

In this new volume of the "International Critical Commentary" Mr. Brooke has provided a remarkably complete apparatus for the study of the Johannine epistles. In addition to the commentary proper and an introduction much fuller than is usual in the series, he supplies an appendix in which the attempt is made to reconstruct the Old Latin version, and a set of very useful indices, analyzing the vocabulary of the epistles and comparing it with that of the Fourth Gospel.

The commentary proper is clear, concise, and scholarly; and has the quality, not often found in commentaries, of being readable and interesting. It is sufficiently full on all matters of detail, but does not submerge the larger questions of interpretation under a mass of mere grammatical and textual discussion. The more outstanding difficulties

¹ *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles.* By Rev. A. E. Brooke, Dean and Divinity Lecturer, King's College, Cambridge. New York: Scribner, 1912. xc+242 pages. \$2.50.

are considered at length in special notes, e.g., the meaning of the word "Paraclete," the history of the Antichrist conception, the reading *ἀντι* in 1 John 4:3, above all the crucial passage on the three witnesses. In the case of this last message Mr. Brooke accepts the explanation that the "water" implies a reference to the attestation of Jesus' sonship on the occasion of his baptism. One cannot but feel that this explanation is inadequate, especially in view of the curious affinity of the passage to John 19:34, 35. A few extended notes might well have been devoted to the underlying theological conceptions of the epistle, e.g., life, light, the Spirit. Mr. Brooke is always suggestive when he touches on questions of Johannine thought; and for this reason we regret the more that he has not somewhat widened the scope of his commentary.

His conclusions on the various critical problems which beset the interpretation of these epistles are fully set forth in the introduction. From the strong resemblances in language, style, and teaching he infers that the Gospel and First Epistle are written by the same author; to this author also he ascribes the two shorter epistles, which could hardly have survived except under cover of the more important works. At the same time he allows for differences between the Gospel and the Epistle which seem to indicate that some interval had elapsed before the later work was written. Which was the later work? After a careful discussion, Mr. Brooke decides that the priority lies with the Gospel. Not only does it bear the marks of superior force and originality, but its teaching is everywhere presupposed in the Epistle. The teaching of the Gospel had been misunderstood, or not sufficiently laid to heart, and the evangelist writes a second time to enforce its doctrine in the terms of practical religious appeal. He addresses himself, not to the church at large, but to a special audience with whose circumstances he is personally familiar. Mr. Brooke insists, we believe with justice, that the traditional term "catholic epistles" has given a false direction to the whole interpretation of the work, and that it has chiefly misled the more radical critics. The Epistle is not so much a doctrinal treatise as a pastoral letter, and its ideas are not unfolded according to any formal plan. An ethical and a christological thesis are involved in each other, and while there is some indication of a threefold grouping, we must allow for the free and spontaneous movement of the writer's thought. The immediate occasion of the Epistle appears to have been the withdrawal from the church of certain members who had come under the influence of false teaching; and Mr. Brooke devotes careful discussion to the nature of this heresy. He believes that the writer had in his mind several different types of error—Jewish, gnostic, and docetic—

but that his attack is mainly directed against opinions similar to those of Cerinthus. These opinions had led not only to false conceptions of Christ, but to a setting-aside of the "new commandment" of brotherly love in favor of a purely Old Testament morality.

Not the least interesting section of the introduction is concerned with the two shorter epistles. Mr. Brooke decides that the reference to "the elect lady" must be taken figuratively. With regard to the Third Epistle he is not altogether satisfied with Harnack's suggestion that we have here an attempt to support the primitive itinerant ministry as against the rising episcopate. He argues that while a conflict between the two rival ministries is indicated, the sympathies of the "elder" are with the episcopal movement, which he seeks to use as a safeguard against private ambitions. In connection with the two shorter epistles the great question of authorship comes up for discussion. Mr. Brooke is here content, perhaps wisely, with an open verdict. "We have every reason to believe that an 'elder' held a prominent position in Asia Minor about the close of the first century. There are valid reasons for calling him John. His relation to John the son of Zebedee is a mystery which, at present at least, we have not evidence enough to enable us to solve." On the whole he inclines to the hypothesis that the Johannine literature is due to a pupil of the apostle, although he admits that this conjecture only partially removes the critical difficulties.

Even from this meager summary it will be possible to form some conception of the range and the critical value of Mr. Brooke's work. He has faced all the difficulties of a singularly difficult book, and has everywhere shown the same thoroughness of treatment and the same independence and sobriety of judgment. In a good many of its New Testament numbers the "International Critical Commentary" has proved not a little disappointing; but the present volume by Mr. Brooke, along with the no less excellent companion volume on the Thessalonian epistles by Professor Frame, will go far to redeem it. We may be permitted to hope that an effort will be made to maintain the remaining New Testament numbers on the high level now attained.

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RECENT STUDIES OF PROTESTANTISM

The many works devoted to the theology of Albrecht Ritschl have drawn attention incidentally to the changes in his views which occurred in the progress of his investigations, but none of them has attempted a